

Why Workshop?

Workshop instruction revolves around some key ideas:

- Student choice
- Student voice and ownership
- Student responsibility for learning reading, writing, and thinking
- Building a community of learners

Workshop is a way to structure class time that gives students the bulk of time to do the work of learning. As a structure, workshop is composed of three parts:

- Mini-lesson
- Independent student work time
- Debrief/Share

One of the misconceptions of workshop is that teachers have only fifteen minutes in the mini-lesson to teach. Teachers don't teach just in the mini-lesson part of the workshop. As teaching consists of assessment, planning, and instruction, teachers teach the whole way through the workshop:

- *Mini-lesson* – During the mini-lesson, teachers **may** set a purpose, demonstrate a skill, do a think-aloud, show students how to make meaning from a difficult text, present information, model the entry points to an assignment, demonstrate a process...the possibilities are endless if you have a clear purpose.
- *Independent Student Work Time* – During student worktime, teachers **may** listen to a student read for fluency and comprehension, listen to a group discuss a text, recommend a text, have a conversation with individuals or small groups, question to gauge student understanding, help a student get unstuck by asking a question, offer expert advice...the possibilities are endless as long as listening is at the core.
- *Debrief/Share* – During the debriefing/share time, teachers **may** share students thinking and work, synthesize student thinking, make connections from the mini-lesson, set the stage for the next day, hold student thinking on an anchor chart to propel the next day of thinking, ask students to self-assess...the possibilities are endless if you believe that student thinking matters most.

Workshop teaching works as a system because while teachers listen to students talk about their reading and writing, they are assessing what students are learning and beginning to plan their next mini-lesson.

Workshop is a system orchestrated with purposeful reasons in a purposeful manner in order to “serve a common purpose.”

Adapted: Bennett

Revised 7-21-10